



## **Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission**

### **Tuesday, March 24, 2015, at 5:00 p.m.**

### **Highlands-Shelby Park Library Conference Room**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **I. Welcome and Announcements –Katy Schneider Co-Chair**

The following Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, “Commission” or “LMTAC”) members were present: Henry Heuser (Co-Chair), Katy Schneider (Co-Chair), Paul Capiello, Allen Steinbock, Scott Hannah, Maria Koetter, Claude Stephens, Cadell Walker, Betsy Ruhe, Robert Eberenz, Todd Eberle, Aaron Boggs, Amy Johnson, as well as ex-officio Commissioners Mesude Duyar, Sherie’ Long, and Michelle King.

Co-Chair Henry Heuser brought the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

Henry announced that Ex-officio Commissioner Mark White passed away. There will be a memorial tree planting for him on April 10<sup>th</sup> at Shawnee Park. Henry made a motion to officially commend Mark White for his work as city arborist. All were in favor.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes – Henry Heuser, Jr., Co-Chair**

One change was suggested in the minutes for the January 2015 meeting minutes. Henry asked for and received unanimous approval of the minutes from last meeting, with the stated expected completion date for the tree ordinance by the Policy Committee changed from spring 2016 to spring 2015. All were in favor.

#### **III. Old Business**

##### **a. Update from the Office of Sustainability – Maria Koetter, Director of Sustainability**

Commissioner Maria Koetter reported that tomorrow’s press conference will announce the results of the Tree Canopy Assessment. There will be an open comment period for 60 days. There will be three public meetings to review the results of the Assessment. There will also be a surprise announcement at the press conference. Co-Chair Katy Schneider asked that Commissioners respond to the open comment period. She said the tree protection ordinance is a critical piece moving forward. Commissioner Claude Stephens asked what feedback is expected on empirical evidence.

Maria said she hopes for feedback on how to plant large amounts of trees or how to use the study within the community. Feedback can be sent to [CommunityForestry@louisvilleky.gov](mailto:CommunityForestry@louisvilleky.gov).

## **b. Update from Urban Forestry Coordinator – Erin Thompson, Urban Forestry Coordinator**

[See Erin's Report under New Business]

## **c. The Nature Conservancy Update – Cadell Walker**

Commissioner Cadell Walker said Chris Chandler, Director of Urban Conservation, has been doing work with Meera Baht and Chris Hawkins (Director of Global Strategies) to look at 13 major cities to see what they can do in Louisville. Meera Baht and Chris Hawkins are really impressed with what's going on in Louisville. They visited last Monday and are interested in bringing funds here to use our city as model for North American work and possibly worldwide. Henry added that it's a big deal and thanked Cadell for engineering the project. Cadell said Chris' first project is with Healthy Trees Healthy Cities.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is working with Mike Hayman, LG&E and Brightside for their first project – a tree planting in Butchertown. Details of a larger planting project are to be released at a later date.

TNC has 235 native trees they are looking to give away. Interested parties can talk to Cadell.

TNC is again bringing six to eight interns to Louisville in July through its Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future (LEAF) program. Last year they partnered with Louisville Grows and Brightside and they are looking for groups who need additional help this year. The interns will start right after the 4th of July and are staying until the end of July.

# **IV. New Business**

## **a. Tree Canopy Assessment Highlights – Erin Thompson**

Erin Thompson, Louisville Metro Government's Urban Forestry Coordinator, gave a presentation on the results of the Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment. (See Attachment A).

The UTC Assessment will provide percent canopy coverage recommendation for 2005, 2008 and 2012; planting timetables to get to 45%; prioritized planting locations; and impacts on ecosystem services. From 2004 to 2012, our canopy percent decreased 7% (rate of change) from 40% to 37%. This equates to 54,000 trees lost per year.

Henry asked why the UofL student report reported 27%. Erin replied they used iTree and reported 25% - 30% and that the students' study recommended that a more accurate assessment be performed. Commissioner Todd Eberle clarified that this Assessment includes urban parks; the student's report didn't include urban parks.

Claude asked if the granularity was census tracts and property boundaries. Erin said yes.

Erin continued with her presentation. We can expect \$330 million of benefits from ecosystem services annually. The report will tell us where our canopy is the highest and the lowest according to council districts, private v. public lands, and neighborhoods, for example. On our current

trajectory, not including pest impacts, we are projecting Louisville to reach a 25% canopy coverage by 2052. Erin recommended that we aim for a 45% canopy coverage, with no loss, maintaining our current canopy, and planting and maintaining 20,000 acres (~33,000 trees/year). Our goal is to do this in 40 years by 2052.

The press conference is at 10:30am tomorrow on the Metro Hall lawn. The rain location is the Mayor's Gallery at Metro Hall (527 W Jefferson).

Erin said the UTC Assessment includes an executive summary and a much shorter fact sheet. The information will be posted on the Office of Sustainability website. Andrea or Erin will send out the link to the Commissioners tomorrow.

Henry asked how to find out exactly where we need to plant trees. Erin said interested parties can type in an address into the online tree mapping tool and it will show where trees can be planted in the area. There doesn't seem to be a way to show the results at the neighborhood level, but you can see all neighborhoods at once by turning on the neighborhood layer. Tomorrow, we'll show the percent canopy cover of each neighborhood and the existing impervious surfaces where we can plant trees.

All of this information will be available tomorrow. Mesude asked if the map information will be available tomorrow. Erin said she didn't know.

Ex-officio Commissioner (APCD) Michelle suggested we do an on-screen demo at a LMTAC meeting.

Audience member Mimi Zinniel asked if the most recent data, for 2014, would be available. Erin said no. They used data from LOJIC and USDA. 2012 was the most recent aerial imagery that has been produced by either LOJIC or the USDA.

Audience member Ray Bunbridge asked if there would be live coverage of the press conference. Erin said she believed so.

Claude asked if Erin and the Office of Sustainability could train tree canopy assessment ambassadors to spread the data throughout the community. Henry suggested the LMTAC could serve as tree ambassadors. Audience member Josh White said he thought that would be a good idea. He would like to know how to articulate the accuracy of the assessment.

Erin said Patrick Piuma and Patrick Smith are excited to use the data in their urban planning class.

Josh asked if we will be able to tell how many people downloaded the assessment report. Erin said we should be able to do that. Katy said that more people will be able to learn about it through Jim Brugger's article. Josh countered that people will want to look at the map.

Audience member Brandon Coan asked for a conservative cost estimate for planting 33,000 trees per year. Erin said it's about \$500 per tree retail cost, which includes purchase prices and installation cost. It doesn't include maintenance cost. Katy said that private plantings are going to be more important than trees planted by Metro Government. Metro doesn't have enough land to plant enough trees on. Commissioner Aaron Boggs agreed that \$500 is a good estimate. Audience member Mike Hayman said there are several sizes of trees. There are options for purchasing cheaper trees.

Brandon asked if there was a southern Indiana component to the plan. Erin said no. There is no data for southern Indiana in the assessment. Katy said it is a regional problem and it's going to take

regional efforts to solve the problem. She mentioned that other cities have taken a regional approach.

Commissioner Scott Hannah said he's glad that the percent canopy coverage is not as bad as we thought it was. He also said that he appreciates Erin's work. Michelle added that we need to maintain what we do have so that we can make progress.

Todd Eberle asked if Davey Resource Group has been paid in full. Katy said yes for the contribution from the LMTAC Tree Fund. Erin said the funds came from Louisville Metro, MSD, LG&E and LMTAC. The final payment was issued today, once she received the final deliverable. Davey said they are willing to answer questions as needed.

The study is finished but Davey is still working out the kinks on the web viewer.

## **b. Treasurer's Report/Tree Fund Request – Allen Steinbock**

Secretary/Treasurer Allen Steinbock gave a report on the Louisville Tree Fund. The balance as of 2/27/15 was \$4,977. \$9,200 was used to pay for a portion of the Tree Canopy Assessment. (See Attachment B).

Allen made a motion that the LMTAC approve an expenditure of \$4,800 for a completed purchase and planting of nine trees at two locations within Metro Louisville: Baxter Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The money will come from The Louisville Tree Fund account housed at the Brightside Foundation. All were in favor.

Allen announced that an anonymous grant is being donated to the Tree Fund.

Allen made a motion that the LMTAC allow the Commission officers to incur expenses related to an initiative being announced at the March 25, 2015, Mayoral press conference. Such expenses shall consist of staffing, legal and administrative costs in an amount not to exceed the amount of the grants being received. Henry seconded the motion. Henry said the initiative is a surprise initiative from the Mayor's Office. The motion would allow the officers to pay bills for the initiative as they are received. All were in favor of the motion as written.

## **V. Committee Reports**

### **a. Policy Committee/Tree Ordinance – Todd Eberle**

Todd said the Policy Committee is has been looking at 29 other city jurisdictions, as well as the Arbor Day Foundation and the International Society of Arboriculture's model ordinances. The Committee is working on a proposed ordinance which will contain eight articles.

- Article 1 has policy and purpose provisions and definitions. That article is nearly complete.
- Article 2 is on tree planting: e.g., the right tree planted in the right place, planting distances, types of prohibited or recommended trees.
- Article 3 focuses on tree maintenance and protections (being drafted).
- Article 4 describes the City Department of Community Forestry (a new department). It does not discuss personnel positions, but it recommends grouping the Urban Forester and the City Arborist in the same department. It allows the department to contract with other agencies for jurisdiction, such as Metro Parks.

- Article 5 describes the creation of a permanent Louisville Metro Tree Commission. It proposes an 11 member Commission with various Commissioner positions based on geography and professional qualifications.
- Article 6 covers enforcement and penalties (being drafted).
- Article 7 covers appeals of violations. This article is nearly complete.
- Article 8 covers miscellaneous provisions and is largely complete.

Once the draft proposal is finished, it will be presented to the LMTAC, which will give it to Louisville Metro. The committee (11 people) has been working on the draft ordinance for 18 months with 2 meetings per month. Around 600 “person hours” of meeting time have been dedicated to the project thus far. The Committee includes Michelle King, Ex-officio Commissioner (Planning and Design) Sherie’ Long, Todd and Katy, as well as members from an environmental organization, APCD, four attorneys, a landscape architect, a certified arborist, and a past President of the Louisville Nurseryman’s Association.

Katy said this ordinance will give the Commission permanence. The Commission will become a resource to the new Community Forestry department. We will be recommending a lot more expertise on the group. Todd said there will be a permanent relationship between the department and the commission.

#### **a. Projects Committee – Paul Capiello (Co-Chair)**

Commissioner Paul Capiello said the Projects Committee has been working on the Tree Species List to be incorporated in the Land Development Code (LDC). It is 11 pages long. The public doesn’t want an 11 page list, so they bolded 40 trees that are the most commonly attainable species. They want to start simple to get something out there. Each year they will tweak the list. They still need to decide how to deliver the information. Should this be a PDF? We don’t want it to be an outdated list. They thought they could place it on the Office of Sustainability website so that the most current list is updated yearly. Katy mentioned Tree Harmony which is out of Philadelphia. It matches individuals with trees. Audience member suggested that the city list good trees to plant in the newsletter. Claude said the list should help people choose a selection of trees rather than planting one species. Paul said the list contains tree size, class, a comments section, and what trees are good to plant along the street and which trees are good for narrow areas. Todd said his policy requires that this list be updated annually.

## **VI. Community Projects Update**

Mike Hayman reported the following projects:

- The TNC project in Butchertown (800 and 900 block of East Washington) will show that we can have a nice canopy if we prune trees when they are young. The partners on the project are Erin (who paid for the removal of pear trees), and TNC who paid for the new trees. It’s very expensive for LG&E to trim pear trees every three years. LG&E is going to help prune the newly planted trees, which is cheaper in the long run.
- Tom Eberle, the Principal at Atherton, is paying for some trees. If we could get support from other Principals to plant on school grounds, we could make a huge impact.
- Swift parking lot - Jessica Loving, Swift’s PR representative, donated \$500. They are going to build a few sample boxes to protect the trunks. Once they have a cost, they can extrapolate to the whole parking lot.
- There is a Black Glum trial (native tree) at the Seneca Golf Course. They did 10 last year, and are planting 5 new ones this year.

- Bing Johnson is planting trees in her neighborhood. This is the last 15 Ecotech trees. They will be delivered tomorrow.
- Mike has begun negotiations with a west end school, backed-up against the Watterson. It's a boarding school. They are looking at street plantings on the 36th street side.

Commissioner Amy Johnson said it's hard to get people to take trees and commit to watering them. People are concerned with branches and leaf clean-up. Amy said she has worked with homeowner associations and has given library presentations to inform citizens on their concerns.

Aaron asked if Bill Fountain knows about his Black Gum project. Mike said he doesn't know.

Erin announced a project that is joint effort between Brightside, a private funder, and MSD. It's the centennial project. They wanted to make a good impact in the downtown area. They are planting 100 oaks on East Jefferson and created 14 or 15 new tree wells. The oak trees will go in next to Spindletop, and perhaps by the downtown Ford. Doe Anderson donated \$25,000 for the project. Claude asked how big the tree wells are. Erin said they selected East Jefferson because the sidewalks are larger so they could make larger tree wells.

Sherie' announced that Louisville Grows will be planting 165 trees in Shawnee this weekend. Erin said she recalls Valerie saying they secured MSD funds.

Audience Member Ray from the Tyler Park Neighborhood Association said the new trees on Tyler Park sledding hills survived this year.

Henry, on behalf of the Commission, wished Gina O'Brien, Executive Director of Brightside well. She is due to have her baby any day.

## **VII. Adjourn**

Henry adjourned the meeting at 6:18pm. The next meeting is April 28, 2015, at 5:00pm in the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District Boardroom.